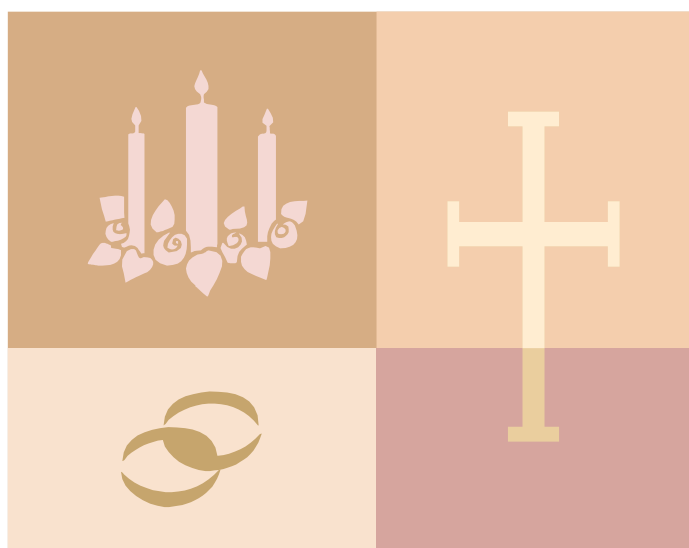


Celebration Of Christian Marriage



Ridge United Methodist Church

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION

- 1 The Celebration of Christian Marriage –
Scheduling the Service
- 2 The Celebration of Christian Marriage –
Counseling, The Marriage License,
Planning the Service
- 3 The Celebration of Christian Marriage
Decoration and Photography
- 4 Music for the Celebration of Christian Marriage
Powerpoint Presentations
- 5 A Basic Pattern of Worship
 - I. Gathering
 - II. Proclamation of the Word
 - III. The Marriage
 - IV. Thanksgiving
 - V. The Peace,
- 6 Scripture Readings
- 7 Wedding Regulations and Building Policies

THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT RIDGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CONGRATULATIONS!

Your wedding day is one of the most important days of your life. We at Ridge Church are pleased that you plan to celebrate your marriage here, and we want to assist you in making this a beautiful and meaningful experience. The services of our pastors, administrative assistant, and our music staff are available for counseling advice and problem solving.

FACILITIES

Ridge Church offers its sanctuary, parlor, fellowship hall, kitchen and lawn for your special event. The sanctuary seats about 260. Fellowship Hall seats about 160 at tables. The church parlor serves as a bride's room and includes a full-length mirror. Women may use this as a dressing room. There is a restroom across the hall. Men may use a classroom as a dressing room. Receiving lines may be in the narthex, main foyer or outside.

SCHEDULING THE SERVICE

The date and time of the wedding and rehearsal should be scheduled with the church office as soon as possible. This may be done 4 to 12 months in advance of the wedding to assure availability. The administrative assistant will help you schedule an initial interview or consultation with the pastors, and will prepare a wedding bulletin should you wish to use one.

Your wedding date cannot be confirmed until after this initial interview. You will be asked to complete a contract for services. Non-members are asked to pay a security deposit which secures the date for your wedding. After the first meeting you will want to call the Music Director, **Rich Boban**, 219-670-6926, to confirm availability and to discuss music.

Because the service is a *Christian worship service*, it is assumed that couples who want to be married in the church have a commitment to the Christian faith and are members, or have interest in membership in this or another Christian congregation.

The pastors of Ridge Church will be in charge of each wedding held in our building. If you wish a guest pastor to assist, this must be cleared with our pastor in the initial interview. The Ridge Church pastors will issue an invitation to the guest pastor.

COUNSELING

The pastors will establish a plan of counseling sessions with you at the time of the initial consultation. This usually includes a minimum of three sessions about the meaning of Christian marriage.

These sessions will help you identify strengths of your relationship, set common goals, clarify differences, resolve problems, and plan the “Service of Christian Marriage” in a way that is meaningful and helpful. Books, articles and other resources will be made available in response to special needs.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

In Indiana, persons 18 years of age or older may apply for a marriage license. Each person must have proof of birth, and if either has been divorced, the date the divorce became final.

You should apply for a marriage license at the office of the County Clerk where one or both parties reside, or in the county where the marriage is to be performed. Please get the license to the pastors by the time of the wedding rehearsal.

PLANNING THE SERVICE

The celebration of Christian marriage is a *service of worship* in which two people stand before the altar of God and recognize that the love that will bind them together forever cannot be a fragile human invention, but comes from the Creator. In this service of worship, the two pledge their unconditional faith to each other and ask the blessing of God and the church upon their union. The congregation, your guests, are not present as spectators but as worshipers! Remembering this will help guide you in deciding what is appropriate or inappropriate.

It is not necessary to perpetuate trite wedding customs that no longer have meaning for us—this is true in seating arrangements, clothing, placement of the wedding party, reception foods, or using only men to usher. While you may wish to continue many of those customs, be aware as you plan that there is room for creativity, and that customs do not necessarily carry the weight of law.

Remember, too, that happiness in marriage is not dependent upon the amount of money you spend on the wedding or on the number of attendants you have. The vows taken before God are the only thing essential to the service. All your planning, therefore, should keep in mind that you are making plans to lead people in worship, a celebration of your marriage before God. You and your friends and family will be gathered as a congregation.

DECORATION

Because marriage is a service of worship, all the liturgical furnishings, art, and symbols must remain in place in the sanctuary. These symbols of the faith may be powerful reminders of God's action in our lives.

The architecture and interior design of Ridge Church have been described as reflecting "elegant simplicity." This design lends itself to simplicity in decoration. Elaborate and expensive designs are discouraged.

Your florist may arrange with the church to use the brass flower receptacles that are available, or to provide new ones. Candelabra are available from the church. A charge is made for the purchase of candles, which the church will supply. Ask your florist to call the church office, 838-4770, during the week before the wedding to arrange for time of delivery.

A white aisle carpet is not required. Should you however, decide to use one, arrange for it with the florist. The required length is forty feet. If you are using a unity candle, it may be purchased from your florist, or another source. Plastic must be placed underneath to protect carpet and furnishings from wax.

No decorations of any kind may be fastened to sanctuary furnishings with nails, staples, screws, adhesive or unpadded clamps. All decorations should be in place at least one hour before the service.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony. No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony—either by a photographer or guests. Ushers should indicate this when seating a guest carrying a camera. During the service, time exposures may be taken by the photographer, provided that they are taken from the back of the room in a manner that does not call attention to itself.

Video taping is permitted if it can be done quietly and unobtrusively. Please inform your photographer of these rules. The photographer should check with the pastors upon arrival at the church to discuss plans for photography.

MUSIC FOR THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Because the celebration of Christian marriage is a service of worship, music should be selected that contributes to praise and thanksgiving to God. Worship music inspires, uplifts and illumines Christian truth while preparing the worshippers for that purpose. The pastors and organist will gladly help you make these selections.

Rich Boban, Director of Music, is our wedding organist/pianist. As soon as possible after scheduling the wedding date, ***you should contact Rich to determine his availability and reserve his services.*** If he is not available for the wedding, he has the prerogative and obligation to approve the substitute. The organist's fee should be paid together with other wedding fees, at least two weeks prior to the wedding service.

The music for the service may be organ, piano, strings, woodwind, brass, or combinations thereof. You may also speak to Joe for assistance in selecting other types of musicians including soloists. Only competent vocal and/or instrumental musicians should be selected in consultation with the wedding organist/pianist, who will be available to rehearse (***not teach***) the music. Copies of music shall be provided in the proper keys, at least four weeks in advance, by the wedding couple. Photocopies of copyrighted music are illegal and are therefore not acceptable.

Congregational hymns can help your guests feel a part of the action. If you wish to use congregational music, the pastors or church musicians can make appropriate suggestions.

Prerecorded music is inappropriate for worship/wedding services.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS:

The use of the screens during the worship/wedding service is limited to pre- or post-service times only. All presentations need to be approved by the pastors and Music Director. Because pre-recorded music is inappropriate, consultation with the Music Director is required to select other background music.

Couples are responsible for providing a PowerPoint on a flash drive, as well as an individual to operate a computer.

A BASIC PATTERN OF WORSHIP FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

I. GATHERING.

A. ENTRANCE

The bride and groom may enter separately or together, with their parents or members of their families. There may be a formal procession with instrumental music or congregational singing

B. GREETING

The greeting welcomes the people and explains the purpose of gathering. It may be given by the pastor or a lay person who may be a member of the wedding party. If the entrance did not include a processional hymn, a hymn of praise may be sung following the greeting.

C. DECLARATION OF INTENTION

The woman and man state early in the service why they are present. Traditional statements or new ones, perhaps written by the couple, may be used. The declaration should state without qualification or reservation the intention of lifelong fidelity and an acknowledgment of responsible family life.

D. RESPONSE OF FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

While the bride is not property to be “given away” it is appropriate for both families and friends to give their blessing. If there are children of the couple by previous marriage(s), it is fitting for them to join in this affirmation.

II. PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

A central act in all public worship is to make the Word of God present to the people. The various parts may be led by pastor, members of the wedding party (including bride and groom) or by other members of the congregation. This may include:

A. PRAYER

B. SCRIPTURE AND OTHER READINGS

C. HOMILY OR SERMON

The sermon focuses on the Christian message of God’s fidelity and what it means for the beginning of a new life together.

III. THE MARRIAGE

A. EXCHANGE OF VOWS

This is the couple's response to the gift of God's proclaimed promise, the good news of grace and love for them contained in Scripture. Again, these may be traditional or original, but should be phrased in unconditional terms which express lifelong covenant.

B. BLESSING AND GIVING OF RINGS

If rings and other visible signs of love and commitment are given, a prayer may be given expressing the intention that these signs will be effective reminders of the couple's vows.

C. DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

After the couple's commitment, the minister announces (*not* pronounces) that they are husband and wife. The declaration may be signified with the lighting of a unity candle or the signing of the license that the time if desired.

IV. THANKSGIVING

After the marriage it is appropriate for the couple to join in an act of thanksgiving. This may be a pastoral or congregational prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer (either said or sung). It may include Holy Communion, which would be offered to the entire congregation. The ancient agape meal or love feast may be included. The pastors can provide information about these various options.

V. THE PEACE AND DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

The peace commonly begins with the kiss and embrace of the husband and wife. It may occur earlier in the service, such as before the thanksgiving, and may give those present an opportunity to exchange greetings in whatever manner seems appropriate.

After the benediction, the couple may be introduced by the names they plan to use after the wedding. Instrumental music or congregational singing at the close should be triumphant and joyful.

A SELECTION OF SCRIPTURE READINGS

PSALMS : 23, 33(selections), 34, 37, 67, 103 (selections), 112, 121, 127,
128, 145 (selections), 148 (selections)

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1: 26 –31; 2: 18—25

Song of Solomon 1: 15—16a;
2: 2—3a; 8—14; 16a
4: 1a; 9—10;
5: 10, 15b—16
6: 3a
8: 6—7

Isaiah 54: 5—8

Jeremiah 31: 31—34

Hosea 2: 16—23

EPISTLES

Romans 12: 1—2, 9—18	Ephesians 3: 14—21; 5:2a, 21—33
I Corinthians 12: 31—13: 8a	Colosians 3: 12-17
I Corinthians 13	I Peter 3: 1—9
I Corinthians 6: 15—20	I John 3: 18—24; 4: 7—16
Revelation 19: 1, 5—9a	

GOSPELS

Matthew 5: 1—10, 13—16; 7: 21, 24—29; 19: 3—6; 22: 35—40
Mark 10: 6—9, 13—16
John 15: 9—16

WEDDING REGULATIONS AND BUILDING POLICIES

1. All weddings must be under the direction of the pastors of the church. A guest pastor may be invited to assist by the Ridge Church pastors.
2. The entire wedding party, including parents, ushers, and attendants must be present at the rehearsal.
3. No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony. Photographers must stay behind the back pew for time-exposure shots during the ceremony.
4. Smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited on church property.
5. Rice and confetti are prohibited. Bird seed, although discouraged, may be used outside the building with payment of an additional custodian fee of \$10.00.
6. Decorators may not use nails, tacks, or adhesive substance on walls, woodwork, or pews. Pew bows may be attached with ribbon, rubber bands, elastic or floral wire in a way that prevents scratching the wood. All decorations should be removed immediately after the wedding.
7. Both the bride and groom must have an understanding of and commitment to the meaning of Christian marriage and be willing to participate in pre-marital counseling sessions.
8. The Ridge Church organist will play for all weddings. In special cases, a substitute may be approved by the pastors.
9. The service of marriage is a worship service. Therefore, any adjustments to the liturgy must be approved by the pastors. Music should be selected that is appropriate for worship and must be approved by the organist and pastors.
10. Fees paid to the church should be paid in full **two weeks** prior to the wedding. If a security deposit is required, it will be returned if all regulations and building policies are followed and the building is left in good condition.

We understand and agree to these regulations and policies for our wedding to be held at Ridge Church on (Date)_____ (Time)_____.

Bride's Signature _____

Groom's Signature _____